

COVID-19 PCR TESTING

Saliva Specimen Collection Procedure For Specimen Collectors

The specimen collection packet (“Packet”) contains a collection tube, 2 duplicate barcode labels, absorbent pad, and requisition form in a Biohazard plastic bag.

Patients should NOT have food, drink, tobacco, smoke, gum, or nasal spray for 30 minutes before giving the saliva specimen.

- a) Collector must wear PPE (mask and gloves; plus, additional PPE if required by your organization) prior to contact with patient.
- b) Before collection, Patient should wash hands with fragrance free soap and water or clean hands with an alcohol-based sanitizer.
- c) Collector will attach one of the duplicate barcode labels vertically on the collection tube and apply the other barcode to the dedicated space on the requisition form. See the “Requisition Form Example” for filling out, signing, and dating the Requisition Form.
- d) To encourage saliva production, Collectors can give Patients the “Patient Specimen Collection Procedure” or use that form to instruct Patients to first swallow and then think about or visualize favorite foods, upcoming meals, biting into a lemon or sour pickle.
- e) Patient should gently expel pooled saliva into the collection tube until at least 0.3-0.5 ml has been collected (*volume excluding bubbles*). *Reminder: this is the collection of normal pooled saliva, not nasal drainage or coughed up sputum.*
- f) Once collected, Patient should securely screw the cap on the collection tube and provide the tube to the Collector.
- g) Collector will disinfect the collection tube with 70% ethanol or a disinfecting wipe and make sure the barcode on the tube matches the barcode on the requisition form before placing the folded form in the outer pouch and the tube inside the Biohazard bag.
- h) Collector places the sealed Biohazard bags in a box for shipping or delivery to Paratus.
- i) Certified local couriers may be used for local delivery to our laboratory. For shipping, HIPAA compliant carriers (USPS, UPS, FedEx) may be used for overnight shipping of

the specimens to our laboratory for processing. Although the virus RNA in saliva remains stable at room temperature for at least 7 days, a cold pack should be added to the box to help maintain a consistent temperature during shipping. (Consider using a Styrofoam box if available.) Samples should be delivered or shipped to: Paratus Diagnostics, 3055 Hunter Rd., San Marcos, TX 78666.

- j) Dispose of gloves, and register the specimen collection (including date, time and the Collector's initials) on your specimen collection documentation.
- k) If specimens cannot be delivered or shipped on the day of collection, store specimens at 2-8°C until specimen delivery or transport. Specimens must arrive at our laboratory no more than 5 days after collection.